

Campaign to Ban Human Cloning

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HUMAN CLONING: ASSAULT ON LIFE AND DIGNITY

Human cloning is a form of asexual reproduction. It is done by taking genetic material from a person's body cell and injecting it into an egg, then stimulating the egg to begin embryonic development. Genetically the cloned embryo is virtually identical to the person whose cell was used. Some people would use cloning to produce infants as "copies" of living or deceased people, while others would use it to mass-produce human embryos to be destroyed as raw material for experimentation. But in both cases the cloning procedure is the same.

Human cloning is wrong. It dehumanizes human procreation and treats human beings as laboratory products, as nothing more than carriers of traits that others find useful. Cloning human embryos for research (so-called "therapeutic cloning") demeans life by creating new human lives in order to destroy them. Cloning embryos for live birth (so-called "reproductive cloning") violates human dignity, robbing the child of a real mother and father and subjecting him or her to other people's pre-conceived blueprints for the "perfect" or wanted child. In addition, attempts at live birth would involve the "trial and error" deaths of countless developing humans -- Dolly the cloned sheep was born after 276 failed attempts -- and any cloned humans who survive will likely suffer from devastating health problems.

Some say they want to ban the live birth of cloned humans ("reproductive" cloning), but allow use of cloning to create human embryos for research purposes ("therapeutic" cloning). This is morally wrong, and is really no ban on cloning at all. It allows cloning, then requires all cloned humans to be killed at an early stage for experimentation. Such a law would not even be effective in serving its alleged goal of preventing the birth of clones. Once cloned embryos are available in laboratories, they would easily be transferred to wombs; then the government could not enforce the ban without taking the gravely immoral and unworkable step of forcing women to undergo abortions.

Banning all human cloning will not impede medical progress. Cloning is increasingly recognized as a wasteful, unreliable and unnecessary path to medical research. For example, some scientists want to produce embryonic clones of patients with disabling diseases, so they can destroy these embryos to obtain "stem cells" genetically matched to each patient. (Stem cells are fast-growing, unspecialized cells that can develop into a variety of cell types in the body.) Yet any effort to treat a major disease by this route would require creating and destroying literally millions of human embryos, and exploiting millions of women as sources of eggs so the embryos could be produced. In fact, enormously beneficial stem cell research can be done today in completely ethical ways, using stem cells from adult tissue, umbilical cords and other sources that involve no harm to human life. New cures can be pursued without creating human lives in the laboratory solely to destroy them.

Act Now to Ban Human Cloning!

The effective and morally acceptable way to prevent human cloning is to ban its use to make new humans in the first place. Legislation has been introduced in Congress to do just this. The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to pass this legislation, but the U.S. Senate is divided on this issue and is more of a challenge.

On January 29, 2003, Senators Sam Brownback (R-KS) and Mary Landrieu (D-LA) introduced the Human Cloning Prohibition Act (S. 245) with 21 other sponsors. This measure will ban human cloning for any purpose. Your two U.S. Senators need to hear from you with this message: "*Please vote for S. 245. Stop all human cloning.*" Write a letter, send an e-mail, phone, stop by and visit their local offices. Write a letter to the editor of a local paper. Act today!

Where to Write

The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Where to Call

Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard: 202-224-3121. Ask for the offices of your Senators. When connected, introduce yourself as a constituent. Briefly convey your request in a clear and polite manner. As with letters or e-mails, leave your name and address with ZIP code, and ask for a written reply stating how the Senator plans to vote.

Mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers etc. for your Senators can be found at www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm.

Helpful Web Sites

A briefing page on legislative action to ban human cloning:

nchla.org/campaign.htm

Congress's web site for text of bills and other legislative information:

thomas.loc.gov

Resources on cloning from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/bioethic

Alternatives to stem cell research that destroys human embryos:

www.stemcellresearch.org

Background from Americans to Ban Cloning:

www.cloninginformation.org

Note: The Spanish translation is in preparation.